

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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TOAST AT BANQUET HOSTED BY PRESIDENT ZARDARI

Islamabad, 14 August 2013

Rev.

21:00

**Your Excellency President Zardari,  
Honoured guests,**

**Assalam Alaikum.**

**I cannot imagine a better way to conclude my visit than with  
all of you here tonight. Thank you very much for your  
kindness and generosity on this historic Independence Day.**

I have had a short stay – but a full visit. I leave Pakistan confident and hopeful.

I last visited this great country exactly three years ago; during the tragic monsoon floods in 2010 which devastated much of the country and left millions without a home or a livelihood.

I was deeply struck by what I saw. I went back to New York and called it a “slow-motion tsunami” and worked to galvanize support.

But something else struck me even more: the response, resolve and resiliency of the Pakistani people.

I strongly believe the world needs to widen its lens and see Pakistan in full perspective – with all its possibility, and all its potential.

This is the Pakistan I know. This is the Pakistan I see.

We feel it in the poetry of Allama Iqbal. We see it in the vision of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. We hear it in the songs of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. *Qaaid-e-Azam*

We are inspired by it through the courage of Malala Yousafzai and the giving spirit of Abdul Sattar Edhi. (01 I1)

And, on good days, we celebrate it in the bats of the Pakistan cricket team!

**The United Nations has worked closely with Pakistan through the years to help meet your challenges.**

**But the UN also relies heavily on Pakistan's support.**

**Pakistan is the largest troop contributing country to UN Peacekeeping operations, with more than 8,000 police and military personnel supporting six of our Peacekeeping Missions. I would like to express my deepest appreciation for this contribution.**



I also thank you for Pakistan's leadership in the Security Council, where you chaired important discussions on Counter-terrorism and Peacekeeping earlier this year.

I commend Ambassador Masood Khan's leadership. He has been representing your country with professional and diplomatic skill.

Terrorism and extremism are threats that Pakistan knows all too well – and for which it has paid the heaviest price.

The UN has been with Pakistan through storms and droughts, through earthquakes and floods. We will always be with you through rain and sun. You can count on the United Nations.

Mr. President, as I said, the UN and Pakistan have a long history – but so do the people of my country – the Republic of Korea -- and yours. In fact, it goes back many, many centuries.



Historians claim that the monk who spread Buddhist teachings throughout the Korean peninsula back in the 4th century – Monk Maranatha -- hailed from present-day Pakistan.

Three centuries later, a Korean Buddhist monk – Hyecho – made an epic journey across the Asian continent.

This was long before the days of planes or trains or air conditioning.

But Hyecho travelled through the Punjab, including Taxila.  
He wrote about his journey and his tales are widely read in Korea to this day.

Hyecho was known for his curiosity, warmth and understanding across cultures.

Many centuries later, that same spirit brings us together today.

Finally, let me say, I don't have a crystal ball, but I saw the future of Pakistan during my visit.

Yesterday, I met an amazing group of young people at the Islamabad College for Girls.

They ranged from about 7 to 25 years of age. Some were former child labourers. Some from rural areas. Some happened to have disabilities.

All spoke of the transformative power of education.

And all had such optimism, such passion. It was contagious.

One was a young woman by the name of Samina Baig. You know her as the first Pakistani female to climb Mt. Everest earlier this year.

I loved her nametag. It read: <sup>(بہتر)</sup> "Samina Baig – Mountaineer ...  
high achiever"

The young people of Pakistan that I met are all high achievers.

They remind me and they should remind all of Pakistan that you can climb any summit ... you can reach any height.

With unity ... with faith ... with discipline. (Tanzim)  
(Ethihad) (Iman)

That is your country's motto.

Let it be your pathway.

**Invest in your potential ... work to realize your possibilities ... and we at the United Nations will continue to be so very proud to call you our partner.**

**I look forward to working with all of you for a strong and secure Pakistan and a better world for all.**

**Thank you once again.**

**Shukriya. Pakistan Zindabad!**